DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 281 SP 010 922

AUTHOR Sunal, Cynthia Szymanski; Heidelbach, Ruth Ann
TITLE The Impact of Teacher Education Centers and Other Field-Based Models on Student Attitudes.
NOTE 13p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Supervisors; *Cooperating Teachers; *Field Experience Programs; *Principals; Rapport; Student Attitudes; Student Teacher Relationship; *Student Teachers; Student Teaching; Teacher Centers; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS Purdue Student Teacher Opinionnaire

ABSTRACT

The Purdue Student Teacher Opinionnaire was administered to 142 student teachers in an attempt to measure differences in attitude between student teachers in different preparation programs, in different student teaching situatuions, and in different program situation interactions. The following factors were examined to determine whether attitudes toward them differed significantly among the selected students: (1) rapport with cooperating teachers, (2) rapport with principal, (3) teaching as a profession, (4) rapport with university supervisor, and (5) professional preparation. The study found significantly more positive attitudes towards the five factors among early childhood and elementary students compared to special education students. No differences were found by placement situation. Significant correlations were found between Rapport with Cooperating Teacher and Rapport with University Supervisor. The study strongly suggests that the variables influencing the attitudes a student forms during his professional training and student teaching experiences are complex and require a search for adequate models of supervision and the types of situations that produce acceptance and enthusiasm in the student. (Author/MB)

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ED137281

THE IMPACT OF TEACHER EDUCATION CENTERS AND OTHER FIELD-BASED MODELS ON STUDENT ATTITUDES

Cynthia Szymanski Sunal and Ruth Ann Heidelbach

Do a student teacher's program, his student teaching situation, and the interaction of that program and situation produce attitudinal effects? Answers to this question were sought in a study using an attitudinal questionnaire with individuals who had recently completed their student teaching experience (1).

The basis of this study lay in the unique development of attitudes towards specific student teaching situations and the training programs proceeding them by each individual experiencing them. The forms these attitudes take are difficult to measure because they reflect the broad range of variables entering into the entire teacher education program. Attempts have been made to assess them utilizing various testing instruments.

The Minnesota Teacher Attitute Inventory (MTAI) (2) is one such instrument. It measures the individual's attitudes towards teaching. Another instrument is The Teacher Characteristic Schedule (3) which is designed to survey teacher attitudes with emphasis being on relationships with students (4).

The MTAI and similar instruments are based upon self-report techniques. These procedures are often utilized in education because of their possible predictive value. In teacher preparation programs they may be used to structure programs which incorporate factors reflecting the most positive attitudes. Self-report measures, however, have a major disadvantage in that the investigator cannot ascertain the extent to which the subject's responses reflect his true attitudes (5).

SP010 922

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Another related disadvantage may occur when an individual identifies himself with a role or setting and therefore tends to approve of it. These limitations must be considered in a study which attempts to determine a relationship between selected variables through use of an attitudinal measure.

Assuming that each individual's program and preservice teaching experiences differ to some degree, this study utilized an attitudinal testing instrument to investigate the following specific questions: Is there a significant difference in attitude between student teachers in different preparation programs, in different student teaching situations, and in different program-situation interactions? Do any of the following factors produce significantly different attitudes among student teachers in a particular program, situation, or program-situation interaction? (1)

1. Rapport with Supervising Teacher
2. Rapport with Principal
3. Teaching as a Profession
4. Rapport with University Supervisor
5. Professional Preparation

Table I and the explanations which follow detail the object of the student teacher attitude being tested by each factor.

TABLE I

Object of Student Teacher Attitude Being Tested by Each Factor

Factor	Object of Student Teacher Attitude
1	Supervising Teacher
2	Principal
3	Possibility of fulfillment of intellectual and professional goals through teaching
4	University Supervisor
5	Teacher Training Program

Factor One deals with the student teacher's feelings about his supervising teacher specifically attending to: his willingness and ability to work with student teachers; his evaluation of the student teacher's work; and the supervising teacher's competencies as a model teacher.

Factor Two surveys feelings about the principal: his professional competency; his interest in student teachers and their work; his ability to communicate; and his skill in human relations.

Factor Three relates to the student teacher's evaluation of teaching in terms of his personal desires and contributions; satisfaction with teaching; and the rewards and demands of teaching.

Factor Four pertains to the supervisor's relationship with the student teacher; adequacy of time spent with, and in, the student teacher's placement; and his evaluation of the student's work.

Factor Five deals with the student teacher's subject matter courses; training for lesson planning and for extracurricular activities; and adequacy of education courses. (6, 5)

These five factors represent areas identified by the investigators as being major concerns of the teacher education program under study. They also represent factors in the instrument which are composed of questions having high correlations with factor scores.

A sixth factor, grade point average, was considered in the analysis of the study to determine its relationship to these five factors. Grade point average was broken down into four levels, using a 0.00 to 4.00 scale with 4.0 being an "A": 4.00 to 3.50; 3.49 to 3.00; 2.99 to 2.50; and 2.49 to 2.00.

The Study

The population for this study included 310 students already enrolled in student teaching at a large publicly-supported university. A stratified random sample of 175 was selected for the study from this group. Included in the final study were 142 students. The strata reflected the student teaching situation as follows: Teacher Education Center, Non-Teacher Education Center; Clinical Team; and preschool agencies.

The Teacher Education Center is one in which students are assigned to the center and may work in several schools, with different teachers, under the supervision of the center coordinator. A Non-Teacher Education Center placement is a more traditional assignment to an individual classroom under the supervision of one cooperating teacher and a university supervisor. The Clinical Team represents a combined approach wherein the student works within a single school with the staff and is a contributing member in the decision-making process within the student teaching program. The preschool placement is undertaken only by early childhood education students and involves working with one age group in a non-public school situation.

The student teachers also reflected differing preparation programs: early childhood (preschool-third grade), elementary (first-sixth grade), and special education (kindergarten-sixth grade).

All students effectively begin their concentration in education during their junior year. Early childhood majors take most of their methods courses in their last three semesters and also student teach for eight weeks in a primary situation. A second student teaching contact in preschool and Kindergarten also occurs. Elementary education students combine methods courses with field work during their junior year. Student teaching follows in their senior year. Special Education majors study educational methods in subject-matter areas and in working with

exceptional children during their junior year and student teach in two placements, one with exceptional children and one in a classroom during their last year.

Program situation interactions reflect pairings of a program with each possible placement. For example, elementary student teachers may be placed in a Teacher Education Center, Non-Teacher Education Center, or Clinical Team. The preschool situation is paired only with an early childhood program. Therefore, there are ten possible program-situation interactions.

Each participant received the Purdue Student-Teacher Opinionaire (1) one month after completion of the student teaching placement. Recipients were told that the study would contribute to evaluation and possible restructuring of preservice education experiences at the University. Questionnaires were mailed to 175 students with 142 returning them. Returns represented approximately an 81% response from student teachers in each of the three programs. The questionnaire, containing 100 questions, utilizes a Likert-type four point scale. Although participants were requested to respond to all questions, sixty-one were chosen for analysis on the basis of their relation to the five factors studied. These factors were deemed most applicable to the goals of the teacher training program at the University in its attempt to structure the best combination of preservice program and experiences for each individual student. These factors were also identified as those with the most questions per factor, thus allowing for more reliable findings. The null hypothesis tested in the study was "There are no differences in attitude on the five factors among student teachers in different programs, situations, and program-situation interactions at the University of Maryland." The responses were analyzed using the Student's t-test, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients with the level of significance (alpha) set at .05 in order to give sufficient control over Type I error, and Linear Multiple Regression techniques.

Findings

Table II summarizes Factor means summed over all participants as derived from analysis. Factor means are accompanied by data which describe the maximum number of points attainable on a factor. Standard deviations and number of participants responding are also shown.

TABLE II

Factor Means Over All Participants

Factor	Mean	Maximum Score Possible	Standard Deviation	Number
1	23.150	54.000	15.190	142
2	28.286	39.000	12.143	140
3	23.092	36.000	8.934	142
4	15.486	30.000	6.717	142
5	18.141	24.000	5.274	142

Analysis of the data collected found no significant difference in mean total score on factors one through five between early childhood and elementary student teachers. However, the means of each of these two groups was significantly higher at the .05 level than was the mean of special education students. Another finding was that the various program and situation interactions have mean total scores on factors one through five that do not differ significantly from each other.

After analysis of the mean total scores on factors one through five, the data was broken down by individual factors.

In comparing factor means by programs, Factor three, Teaching as a Profession, had a mean significantly higher at the .05 level than the other factors among early childhood and elementary students. Among special education students it was

found that Factor five, Professional Preparation, achieved a significantly higher mean.

Camparison of factor means among program-situation interaction groups found that Factor three, Teaching as a Profession, achieved significance among elementary teacher education center and non-teacher education center student teachers. No other significant factors were found among the groups.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients as reported in Table III were used to determine the relationship between the factors and with grade point average. It was found that Factor four, Rapport with University Supervisor, had a significantly positive relationship with Factor one, Rapport with Supervising Teacher, with a correlation coefficient of .568. Factor four also achieved a significant correlation coefficient (.504) with Factor three, Teaching as a Profession. Grade point average had low negative correlations with the factors.

TABLE III

Correlation Coefficients of

Factors 1 to 5 and Grade Point Average

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Grade Point Average
Factor 1	1.000	.277	.312	.568	.144	.037
Factor 2	.277	1.000	.327	.158	.294	-.053
Factor 3	.312	.327	1.000	.503	.324	.035
Factor 4	.568	.158	.503	1.000	.232	-.108
Factor 5	.144	.294	.324	.232	1.000	-.003
Grade Point Average	-.037	-.053	-.035	-.045	-.003	1.000

Linear multiple regression techniques were unable to account for the variance in individual mean scores on the factors or on the mean total score of the five factors. It was possible to use program for prediction of the preschool placement situation. However, neither program, situation, program-situation interactions, grade point average, nor factors could otherwise be used for prediction.

Large, apparently random, amounts of variance were present in Factor one, Rapport with Supervising Teacher and Factor four, Rapport with University Supervisor among all programs, situations, and program-situation interactions. A smaller amount of variance, still somewhat large, however, was found in the responses to Factor two, Rapport with Principal.

Conculsions

The use of an attitudinal questionnaire found early childhood and elementary education students having a higher positive attitude than did special education students towards the five factors considered after the completion of their classroom student teaching experience. When the students were studied by placement situation they did not differ in attitude. This was also true of program-placement interaction groupings.

Early childhood and elementary education students felt most positively that they may be able to fulfill their intellectual and professional goals through teaching, while the attitude of special education students was more negative. The most positive attitudes towards this factor were found among elementary teacher education center and non-teacher education center students when program-situation interactions were considered.

While they were not as positive as were students from other programs that they could fulfill their personal goals through teaching, special education

students felt well prepared for student teaching and for later teaching experiences. While there was no difference in responses from special education students in different placements, they had a more positive attitude towards their preparation than did early childhood and elementary students.

The student's rapport with the supervising teacher and the university supervisor did not differ among groups, placement situations or program-situation interactions. However, large amounts of variance were found in the attitudes of the student teachers towards these two individuals. The Rapport with the Principal was also similar, with the exception of clinical team students, where it was lower.

While group attitudes towards them were similar, Rapport with the Supervising Teacher and with the University Supervisor were highly correlated. Attitudes towards the university supervisor also correlated well with those towards Teaching as a Profession.

Grade point average correlated negatively, and then only slightly, with each of the factors.

It was not possible to use program, situation, program-situation interactions, grade point average, nor factors for purposes of prediction. The exception was in the preschool placement. However, since only early childhood students are placed in preschools, this result would be assumed to occur.

Implications

The implications of the study have import for the methodology used to carry out the study and for the findings themselves. These findings can be generalized and applied to the student teaching program and professional preparation they represent. They can also lead to thought and discussion about areas of related concern.

The results of the study indicate that the questionnaire found few significant differences in its findings. The null hypothesis of no significant differences in attitude among student teachers in different programs, situations, and program-situations at the university was not, however, rejected. The small number of instances in which differences were found may be attributable to several causes.

1. There may be little real difference between the programs and the situations these student teachers have been exposed to.

2. The testing instrument may be composed of statements which may have many different interpretations resulting in chance factors having a high influence over responses.

3. The instrument being attitudinal, may not be testing the type of variable which does differ among the programs and situations.

4. If attitudinal variables are significant measures of the situation, perhaps the ones tested were not those which were applicable to the student-teaching situation under study.

The lack of a 100% return of questionnaires from respondents may cause a bias in the data.

There is a need to further test and to search for the variables that are thought to make the programs and situations independent of each other. Such variables may include the quality of educational practice forming the basis for a teacher preparation program and for the curriculum within a school system.

In examining specific factors, it is found that the student's rapport with the supervising teacher is represented in a wide range of responses. Since several students did not feel that they had developed a good rapport with their supervising teacher, further study of this relationship may be indicated. Variables which could be of import might include the nature of the criteria used for the evaluation of the student teacher's competency and the structure and content of the supervising teacher conferences.

Another individual who has importance for the student teacher is the coordinator or the college supervisor. The supervisor and the supervising teacher were found to have a significantly positive relationship by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients. This seems to indicate that these two individuals influence the student teacher's attitudes towards teaching as a career. The correlation between a student's rapport with his cooperating teacher and his coordinator or supervisor may be a function of the individual respondent's personality, the manner in which the student's two supervisors work together, or the quality of the supervision. The relationship between these two individuals should be studied in depth in order to discover those variables influencing it positively or negatively.

Since the population and sample represent one university, the results of the study can, at present, be generalized only to that group.

In summary, while further study might examine attitudes, it should start with a search for significant variables other than general program and treatment. Researchers should first attempt to better define influential attitudinal variables. Such definition can then be followed by the production of adequate measures by which to test for their existence.

This study strongly suggests that the variables influencing the attitudes a student forms during his professional training and student teaching experiences are complex and require a search for adequate models of supervision and the type of situations which produce acceptance and enthusiasm in the student.

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7. Since only eighteen clinical team students were utilized in the analysis of data, their small numbers make generalizations on program-situation interactions involving them unreliable.